



Editorial

Highlighting the Informationist As a Data Librarian Embedded in a Research Team

Elaine R. Martin, DA, Director of Library Services

University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA, USA

This issue of *JESLIB* focuses on the role of the Informationist or Embedded Librarian in the scientific research process. As biomedical science becomes more data intensive, researchers are faced with a range of data management challenges, problems, and needs. Health sciences librarians are ideal partners for offering scientists at their institutions a range of data management services. By providing these services, librarians are able to create an opportunity to connect and collaborate with a new group of users within their institution with whom they may not have interacted previously. Those librarians who provide these services may be called informationists or embedded librarians.

On November 7, 2012 as part of its annual suite of E-Science Professional Day programming, the Lamar Soutter Library in conjunction with the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, New England Region (NN/LM, NER) sponsored a day-long program for area librarians highlighting the role of the librarian in providing scientific research data management services held at the Hoagland Pincus Conference Center, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Shrewsbury Campus. The eight informationist teams funded by the most recent supplemental award, the “NLM Administrative Supplements for Informationist Services in NIH-

funded Research Projects,” were invited to participate in a panel discussion to describe their specific proposals for assisting their researchers. They also attended a planning meeting the following day. Chris Shaffer, University Librarian, Oregon Health and Science University, gave the keynote address, setting the overall framework for librarians working with biomedical data and research teams. Shaffer’s address, reprinted in this issue, makes the case for health sciences librarians providing an array of research data management services and describes the work of the OHSU Library Ontology Development Group in developing an Integrated Semantic Framework as one example.

The papers that follow touch on many themes: how they plan to interact with their specific research teams, what necessary competencies and skills they anticipated to provide their services; what barriers they encountered and how they are addressing them; and how they plan to evaluate their project results. The issue begins with an editorial by Valerie Florance from the National Library of Medicine (NLM) highlighting NLM’s history and involvement in fostering the informationist role. Sally Gore describes her experience as part of a University of Massachusetts Medical School clinical research team investigating adherence to

breast cancer screening and the challenges of managing data derived from different sources. Alisa Surkis and her colleagues at New York University (NYU) discuss the challenges of managing, sharing, and tracking data and citations when investigators collaborate without collocating on the topic of protein function in cancer pain. Also at NYU, Karen Hanson and her colleagues are playing a role throughout the lifecycle of clinical research data management in auditory research including issues related to data modeling, data collection tools, data queries, and long-term usability of data. Goode and Anton at the Welch Library, Johns Hopkins University, found a willing partner in the Department of Radiology and will perform multiple tasks including a systematic review and the gathering of values from the relevant literature. Hasman and Berryman describe their experience as embedded librarians dealing with survey data generated by the University of Rochester Medical Center's Web Assisted Tobacco Intervention project, which focuses on community college students and uses a novel approach to reduce the number of students who smoke. Whipple and colleagues at Indiana University describe how they found ways to improve the quality of the information in a geographic database as part of a child health improvement computer decision support tool; they plan to participate in community health information outreach services as a result of their involvement in the larger research project. Finally, *JESLIB* introduces its first video article with accompanying video and transcript by Lisa Federer, in which she tells her story as a research informationist at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Although these projects are in the early stages of development, the research informationists have made great progress in being accepted as part of their institution's research teams. The future of the health sciences librarian as a data informationist embedded into a biomedical research team is promising. The lessons learned from the experiences of the librarians in these projects will

serve as models that can convince other researchers to add informationists to their scientific research projects in the future.

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